



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **SMUGGLED PUPPIES SEIZED AT BORDER** *Puppies Were Hidden Under the Front Seats of a Vehicle*

Animal control officers from the County Department of Animal Services (DAS) seized 28 illegally smuggled puppies that had been stuffed under the front seats of a van crossing the Otay Mesa Port of Entry.

Customs officers discovered the puppies and alerted DAS yesterday evening after noticing the base of the vehicle's front seats had been taped to conceal the puppies.

"Some of the 28 puppies needed immediate medical care and were taken to an emergency veterinary clinic," said Dawn Danielson, director of the Department of Animal Services. "The rest of the puppies are being cared for by our Department's animal care and veterinary staff at our shelter in Linda Vista."

The seized puppies range in age from three to five weeks old and include Boxers, Chihuahuas, Cocker Spaniels and Poodle mixes. A recently passed state law says dogs under eight weeks old cannot be sold without veterinary paperwork.

"The department will continue to vigorously enforce the laws regarding the health and welfare of the puppies, but it cannot stop the flood of puppies coming across the border all by itself," said Danielson. "The public can help by not buying puppies from swap meets and street corners. Instead, go to an animal shelter or humane society to adopt a family pet. To us, these animals are family members. To the smugglers, they're dollar bills."

The driver of the vehicle, Carlos Lopez from Los Angeles, was cited for 28 counts of animal cruelty. Prior to the seizure, the puppies were headed to the Los Angeles area to be sold at a swap meet, according to DAS officers.

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